DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 266 838 JC 860 132

TITLE	Piedmont Virginia Community College Telephone Survey to Determine Community Awareness. Report Number 6-84.
INSTITUTION	Piedmont Virginia Community Coll., Charlottesville, VA. Office of Institutional Research and Planning.
PUB DATE	Sep 84
NOTE	17p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Community Attitudes; Community Colleges; Community Surveys; Comparative Analysis; Educational Assessment; *Educational Attitudes; *Educational Needs; Needs Assessment; Public Opinion; Questionnaires; *School Community Relationship; Two Year Colleges

ABSTRACT

In 1984, a telephone survey was conducted to determine community awareness of Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC); to compare findings with results of a similar survey conducted in 1977; and to gain ideas on what additional courses respondents would like PVCC to offer. A random sample of 873 subjects was selected, representing 6.5% of the 13,413 residential listings in the Charlottesville/metropolitan Albemarle County directory. Study findings, based on 493 usable responses, included the following: (1) 36% of the 1977 respondents and 56% of the 1984 respondents reported that one or more household members had attended or visited PVCC; (2) 26% of the 1977 respondents and 15% of the 1984 respondents were not familiar with PVCC; (3) the top-ranked purpose for attending PVCC in both 1977 and 1984 was to "improve job skills"; (4) 25% of the 1984 respondents found out about PVCC through a mailing; (5) 56% of the 1984 respondents and 85% of the 1977 respondents overestimated the cost of PVCC; (6) 71% of the 1984 respondents and 69% of the 1977 respondents underestimated the average age of PVCC students; and (7) the primary reasons given for not coming to PVCC involved perceptions of being too old or not having enough time to attend college. The interview schedule is included. (LAL)

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PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

TELEPHONE SURVEY TO DETERMINE

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

Charlottesville, Virginia
September 1984

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Report Number 6-84
Office of Institutional
Research and Planning

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1984 Telephone Survey to Determine
Community Awareness

PURPOSE

The purposes of this telephone survey were to:

- o Determine community awareness of PVCC by the residents of Charlottesville/metropolitan Albemarle County listed in the Charlottesville City Directory.
- o Replicate a Telephone Survey to Determine Community Awareness accomplished at PVCC in 1977 (Research Report 2-77) and compare 1984 with 1977 results.
- o Determine and compare the answers to other questions related to awareness such as the source of the respondents knowledge concerning PVCC, the respondent's understanding of the cost of attending PVCC and the respondent's understanding concerning the average age of PVCC students.
- o Gain ideas on what additional courses the respondents would like PVCC to offer and to determine what factors are seen by the respondents as causing them to decide not to attend PVCC.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

See the Research Report Number 2-77.

PROCEDURES

This section addresses the following subjects:

- Preparation of the Survey Instrument
- Drawing the Sample
- Selecting and Training of Telephone Callers
- Conduct of the Survey and Data Management

Preparation of the Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was developed by the Coordinator of Institutional Research and Planning. It was virtually identical to the instrument used in the 1977 survey. Because certain lines of questioning appeared to favor a sequential arrangement the survey instrument was designed using the format of a logic flow chart, each major path generally constituting a separate level of awareness of the college. Figure 1 provides a summary of the paths in the questionnaire.

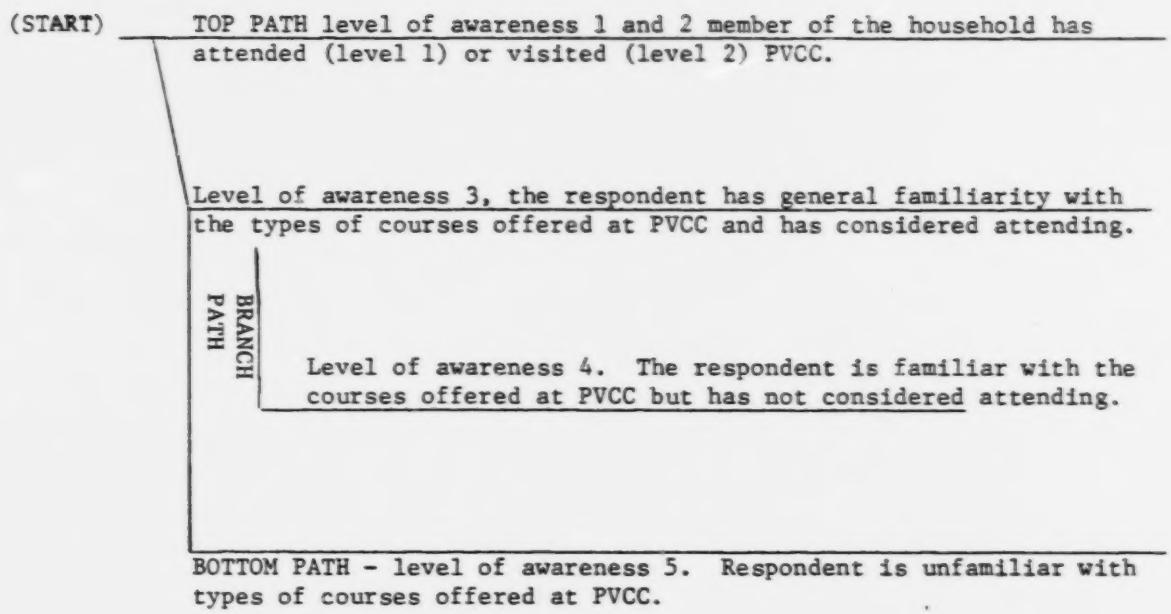

(START)
TOP PATH level of awareness 1 and 2 member of the household has attended (level 1) or visited (level 2) PVCC.
Level of awareness 3, the respondent has general familiarity with the types of courses offered at PVCC and has considered attending.
BRANCH PATH
Level of awareness 4. The respondent is familiar with the courses offered at PVCC but has not considered attending.
BOTTOM PATH - level of awareness 5. Respondent is unfamiliar with types of courses offered at PVCC.

Figure 1 - Flow of Questions and Levels of Awareness, PVCC Telephone Survey.

A standardized lead-in paragraph was written for use by all callers. For convenience the questionnaire was arranged so that the caller could mark or write in responses on the questionnaire itself; one sheet being provided for each subject in the sample. An identification block was placed at the lower left corner of the questionnaire sheet showing the phone number, name and street address of the subject selected. Below that was a place for the caller to place check marks to record the results of attempts to call the party, e.g. disconnected, refused, call back, busy, no answer, and call completed. Spaces for three separate attempts were included. A copy of the standardised lead-in paragraph and a sample questionnaire are included at appendices A and B respectively. The question included at the end of the lead-in sheet corresponds the the initial question at the upper left corner of the questionnaire. This inclusion was made to facilitate the transition from the lead-in to the questionnaire. The survey instrument was examined for reliability and validity in 1977.

Drawing the Sample

The sample was drawn from the 1983 edition of the Charlottesville City Directory. The city directory was selected instead of the telephone book because one section of the city directory is organized by street and addresses along each street. This includes notation of cross streets and facilitates locating the address on a map. Since one of the objectives of the survey was to assess awareness by different regions within the survey area, the ability to locate the selected subject's dwelling was important. This section of the city directory includes name, telephone number and the address.

Randomization of the sample was accomplished by selecting the numbers to be called at random from each column of each page of the city directory listing. Two telephone numbers were chosen from each column. The entry points for each number selected corresponded to marks made on a master key that was fitted next to the column. The location of the marks on the master key were selected by use of a table of random numbers. The master key entry points were then placed adjacent to each column of each page in turn. The listings closet to each of the entry points on the key were chosen unless they happened not to have phone listed or to be a business address. In those cases the next suitable listing was selected, moving downward if the page number was even and upward if the page number was odd. In this manner 873 subjects were selected representing a 6.5% sample of the 13,413 residential listings in that section of the city directory.

By consulting a city map marked with the regions (area A through G) the survey subjects were listed by name, address, telephone number, and area designator as they were drawn from the city directory. The region boundaries are the same as used in the 1977 study and are generally as follows:

(See Figure 2)

A. The area from Vinegar Hill Northeast and east including Key West.

B. Belmont Area.

C. The area West of Ridge Street and South of the Rail Lines.

D. The area bounded on the North and West by Madison Avenue and 14th Street, on the East by Commerce Street and the South by the C and O Railway.

E. The area inside the Route 250 By-Pass - Route 29 By-Pass not included in areas A and D above. This includes the University and the Northwest Quadrant of the city.

F. The Meadow Brook -- Four Seasons -- Woodbrook Areas.

G. All areas west of the Route 250 By-Pass - Route 29 By-Pass and Hydraulic Road.

Selecting and Training the Telephone Callers

The telephone callers used were four employees of Manpower hired four hours per day for five weekdays. The training of the callers consisted of an explanation of the overall objectives of the study and a detailed explanation of the survey instruments and the standardized lead-in paragraph. The callers were instructed to verify the name and address of the respondent at the conclusion of the conversation if the respondent would like additional information about PVCC. Callers were asked to stress the availability of the city bus service and the dates of fall registration.

The callers were given instructions on how to mark the survey sheet as the call progressed so that the path followed could be readily established for coding. On the upper path if the respondent indicated that members of the household had both attended and visited, the interview should concentrate on those who had attended.

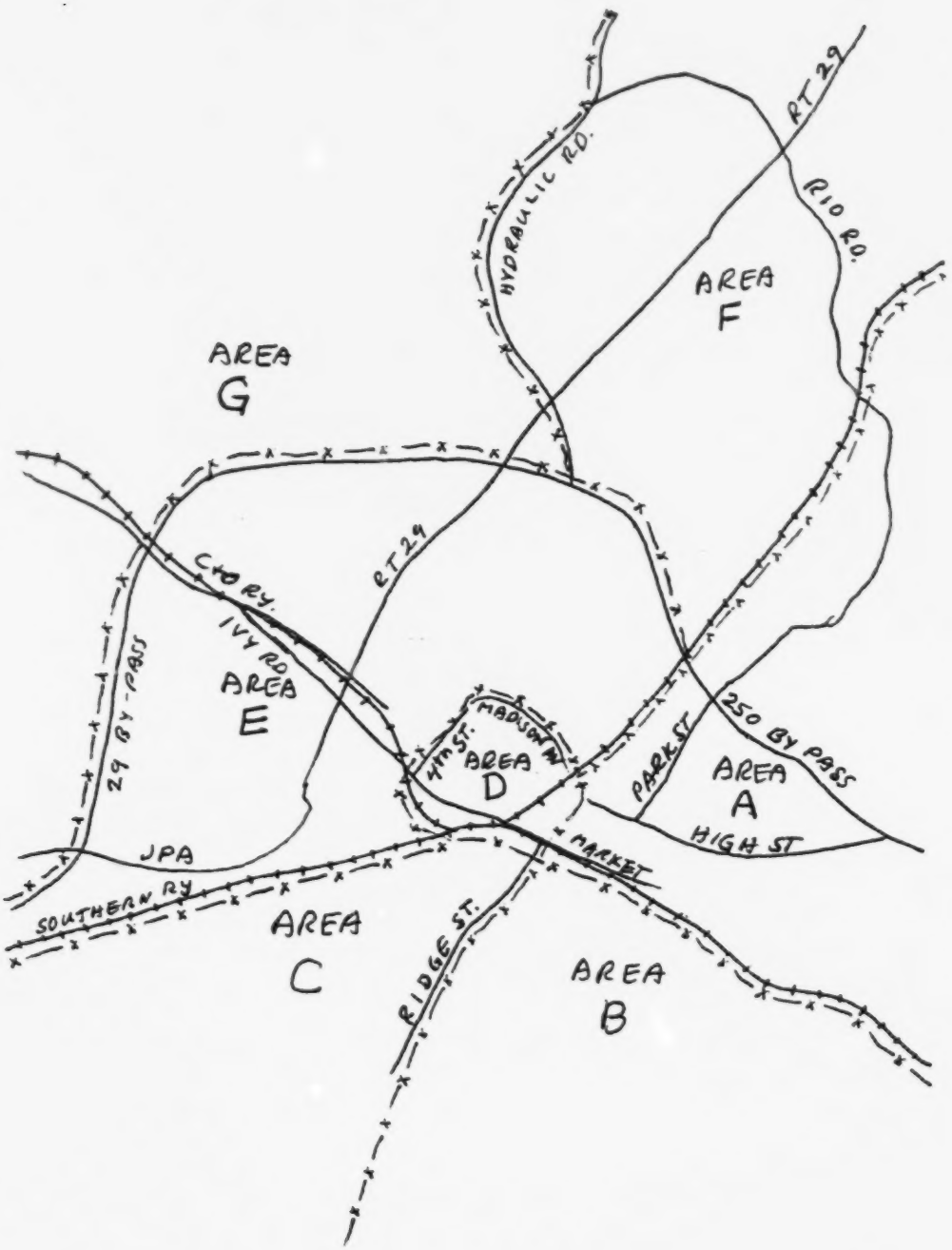


Figure 2. Areas for the Survey

Concerning those questions requesting an estimate of the cost of a three credit course at PVCC and an estimate of the age of PVCC students, the callers were instructed to provide the correct information to the respondents.

The question on the middle path concerning what factors prevented the respondent who had considered attending PVCC from actually coming was designed to collect information on alternatives that might attract greater numbers from the community e.g. week-end classes.

All callers were also instructed concerning the importance of being polite and considerate. The hours for calls were set at between 5:30 and 9:30 a.m.

Conduct of the Survey and Data Management

The survey was introduced by local radio and TV interviews the week before calling commenced.

The calls were completed during the weekdays of September 5 through 11, 1984.

During the conduct of the telephone interviews the plans for the data management and display were developed. The statistical package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was selected as it provides an available and relatively simple vehicle for the statistical computations needed. The data was coded by the Coordinator of Institutional Research and Planning employing seven variables:

Area - The region of the survey area in which the respondent lives (seven values: A through G)

V1 - The results of the phone call: six values (1) disconnected number, (2) party refused to cooperate, (3) the call was not successfully completed for some other reason, (4) the call was completed on the first try, (5) the call was completed on the second try and (6) the call was completed on the third try.

V2 - Awareness: five values: (1) a household member had attended PVCC, (2) a household member had visited PVCC, (3) the respondent was familiar with PVCC and had considered attending, (4) the respondent was familiar but had not considered attending and (5) respondent was not familiar with the community college.

V3 - Purpose of attending or visiting: eight responses: (1) for degree or certificate, (2) for college transfer credits, (3) for occupational training, (4) to improve skills, (5) for personal satisfaction, (6) visited to attend a meeting, (7) for other reasons and (8) no response. (Note the 1977 survey did not include the the first value for this variable).

V4 - Information source: seven responses: (1) newspaper (2) radio (3) TV (4) acquaintance (5) other source (6) mail-out and (7) no response.

V5 - Estimated cost of a three credit course: four responses: (1) estimated cost too high, (2) estimated cost correct (plus or minus $5.00), (3) estimated cost too low and (4) no response.

V6 - Estimated age of average PVCC students: four responses: (1) estimated age too high, (2) estimated age correct (plus or minus three years), (3) estimated age too low and (4) no response.

The cross tabulations selected were:

1. Area by phone call results
2. Area by levels of awareness
3. Area by purposes of attending or visiting
4. Area by source of information about PVCC
5. Area by estimated cost of a three credit course
6. Area by estimated average age of PVCC students

The survey forms were analyzed by hand to determine responses to the questions concerning new classes suggested for PVCC and reasons given for not attending PVCC.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Response Rates

1984 Survey	1977 Survey	
873	921	Number of residential telephone numbers constituting the sample
263	253	Could not be contacted because of busy signals or no answers in three attempts or because the phone had been disconnected
610	668	Numbers were reached, this includes those who refused to respond to any question
117	124	Refused to respond to the survey
493	544	Respondents for whom the survey was successfully completed (usable responses)
3.7%	4.4%	Percent of the population of residential numbers that were successfully contacted
19.2%	18.6%	Refusal rate as a percent of numbers reached
341 (69%)	397 (73%)	Contact made on the first attempt to call
99 (20%)	110 (20%)	Contact made on the second attempt to call
53 (11%)	37 (7%)	Contact made on the third attempt to call
493 (100%)	544 (100%)	Total contacts made (usable responses)

Levels of Awareness of PVCC

1984 Survey	1977 Survey	
56.2%	35.7%	Respondents said one or more household members had attended or visited PVCC
28.6%	38.4%	Respondent was generally familiar with PVCC's types of offerings but had not attended or visited
15.2%	25.9%	Respondent was not familiar with PVCC

Tables 1 and 2 provide a cross tabulation of the geographical regions with the three levels of awareness listed above for the 1984 and 1977 surveys respectively. Figures are percentages within each row (geographical area).

Table 1. 1984 Survey
Geographic Area by Level of Awareness
(Figures are percentages within geographic area)

AREA	ATTENDED OR VISITED PVCC	FAMILIAR WITH PVCC OFFERINGS	NOT FAMILIAR WITH PVCC
A	56%	26%	17%
B	53%	28%	20%
C	56%	24%	19%
D	32%	44%	24%
E	47%	34%	19%
F	69%	24%	6%
G	66%	28%	6%
TOTAL	56%	29%	15%

Table 2. 1977 Survey
Geographic Area by Level of Awareness
(Figures are percentages within geographic area)

AREA	ATTENDED OR VISITED PVCC	FAMILIAR WITH PVCC OFFERINGS	NOT FAMILIAR WITH PVCC
A	36%	36%	29%
B	31%	25%	44%
C	49%	27%	23%
D	20%	40%	40%
E	28%	46%	26%
F	41%	43%	16%
G	37%	49%	15%
TOTAL	36%	38%	26%

Purposes of Attending or Visiting PVCC

Those respondents indicating that a member of their household had attended or visited PVCC were asked to give the purpose for attendance or visiting.

1984 Survey	1977 Survey	
15%	(not included)	Earn a degree or certificate
10%	16%	College Transfer
15%	7%	Occupational Training
20%	26%	Improve Job Skills
14%	22%	Personal Satisfaction
4%	6%	Visited to attend a meeting
23%	22%	Other purpose of visit

Note: The other category included attending baseball games, just visiting, voting, etc.

Sources of Information Concerning PVCC

Respondents who had attended, visited or expressed awareness concerning PVCC were asked how they found out about PVCC.

1984 Survey	1977 Survey	
21%	32%	Newspaper
2%	2%	Radio
3%	1%	TV
25%	6%*	Mailout
19%	32%	Acquaintance
29%	28%	Other**

*Only one-half of the 1977 respondents were offered this option as a response because the 1977 survey was conducted one-half before and one-half after the first PVCC fall mailout.

**The other category was often "I've always lived here".

Respondent Estimates of PVCC Cost

1984 Survey	1977 Survey	
56%	85%	Over estimated cost
44%	15%	Correctly estimated cost
0%	0%	Under estimated cost
(N=9)	(N=53)	

Respondent Estimate of Average Student Age at PVCC

1984 Survey	1977 Survey	
18%	18%	Over estimate average age
12%	13%	Correctly estimate average age
71%	69%	Under estimate average age
(N=34)	(N=101)	

Additional Questions

In response to the question "are there any courses PVCC does not now offer that you would like us to offer?"

197 respondents indicated that they could not think of any other courses that PVCC should offer

49 respondents suggested courses they would like to see offered

Courses mentioned more than once included:

- o more humanities, particularly foreign languages in the evenings (5)
- o more paralegal courses (2)
- o medical terminology (2)
- o insurance courses and state insurance exam (2)
- o courses required for state teaching certificates (3)
- o small engine repair (2)
- o advanced auto mechanics (3)
- o more computer science (4)

Concerning the question "What kept you from coming to PVCC?" The responses were as follows:

Money - - - - - - - - - - -	8 responses	
Time - - - - - - - - - - -	23 responses	(most respondents suggested more evening classes)
Transportation - - - - -	2 responses	
Too Old - - - - - - - - -	37 responses	
Other - - - - - - - - - -	5	(child care problems (2), no course to enhance job skills, afraid of not being successful, evening classes are too long)

Respondents were asked if they wanted a copy of the PVCC schedule sent to them; 116 respondents asked for a PVCC schedule and/or a city bus schedule.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The refusal/response rates of the 1984 survey are approximately the same as the 1977 survey. The survey appears to be a valid reflection of the residents of Charlottesville and metropolitan Albemarle County who have telephones. There is, of course, a bias against residents without telephones built into all telephone surveys.

The proportion of respondents who report one or more household members have attended or visited PVCC increased dramatically in the last seven years (from 36 percent in 1977 to 56% in 1984.) This has been accompanied by a drop in respondents indicating they are not familiar with PVCC (from 26% in 1977 to 15% in 1984.) It would appear that the college is well known in the community surveyed and that no further growth can be anticipated for the reason that we are a relatively new and unknown institution. Growth can continue as the results of demographic changes and changes in course and program offerings as well as other factors such as increased success in high school recruitment, better retention rates, improved transportation and becoming better known in the more distant parts of our service region.

The levels of awareness of PVCC have changed radically in some of the geographic areas of Charlottesville. For example the percentage of respondents who were not familiar with PVCC in Belmont dropped from 44% to 20% and along the Highway 29 corridor from 16% to 6%. In that same Highway 29 corridor (the most aware region) the number who had attended or visited PVCC rose from 41% to 69%.

The quarterly mail out has grown as a source of information concerning PVCC for respondents. In 1977 respondents most frequently mentioned "newspaper" and "acquaintance" as the two ways they found out about PVCC. Now they mention "mailout" and "newspaper."

Respondents continue to over estimate the cost of PVCC and under estimate the average age of PVCC students.

The courses suggested by respondents should be reviewed by the instructional administrators for possible incorporation into the curriculum.

Reasons given for not coming to PVCC center on perceptions of being too elderly or not having enough time to attend. Future public relations plans should consider ways to communicate the ideas that we do serve the elderly and that we offer extensive night classes.

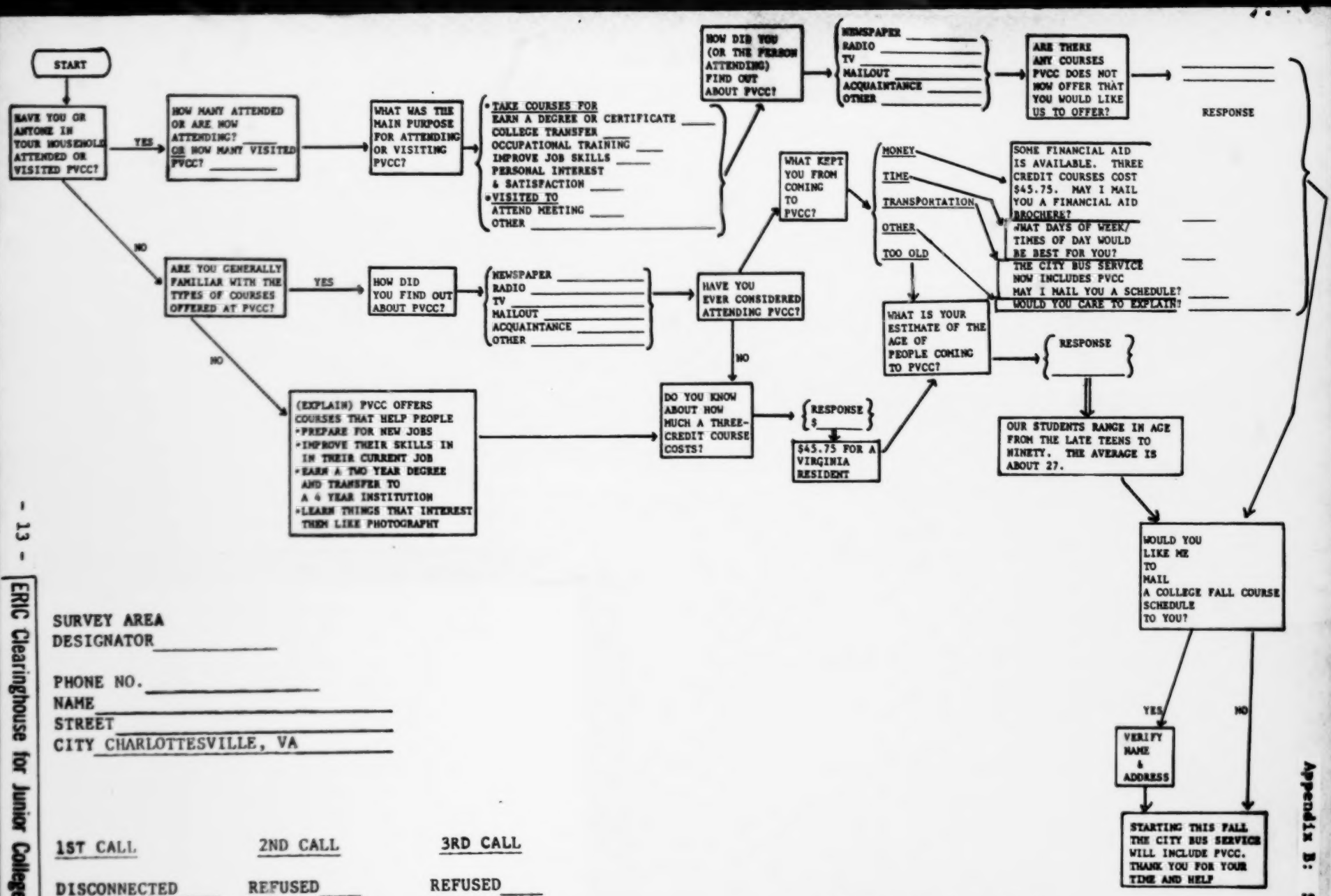
Appendix A: Standardized Lead-In for the Survey

Good Evening, I am _____from Piedmont Virginia Community College. We are conducting a telephone survey of the Charlottesville Community to find out how aware people are of their community college and also how we can better serve you. Your phone number was selected at random. If you please, I would like to ask you questions about our college and your use of it; it will only take a moment, and your replies will be held confidential. (If this is an inconvenient time for you I can call back later). (Set a time and date.)

First, have you or has anyone in your household attended or visited Piedmont Virginia Community College?

Other instructions for making calls:

1. mark on survey sheets in red
2. be polite - do not force a response
3. talk to an adult in the household
4. phone 5:30-9:30 Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Monday, Tuesday
5. return all survey sheets to this office by Wednesday, September 12
6. close conversations with new bus route and registration 19-20 September 10:30 - 6:30


START
HAVE YOU OR ANYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD ATTENDED OR VISITED PVCC?
YES
HOW MANY ATTENDED OR ARE NOW ATTENDING? ____
OR HOW MANY VISITED PVCC? ____
WHAT WAS THE MAIN PURPOSE FOR ATTENDING OR VISITING PVCC?
•TAKE COURSES FOR
EARN A DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE ____
COLLEGE TRANSFER ____
OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING ____
IMPROVE JOB SKILLS ____
PERSONAL INTEREST & SATISFACTION ____
•VISITED TO
ATTEND MEETING ____
OTHER ____
HOW DID YOU (OR THE PERSON ATTENDING) FIND OUT ABOUT PVCC?
NEWSPAPER ____
RADIO ____
TV ____
MAILOUT ____
ACQUAINTANCE ____
OTHER ____
ARE THERE ANY COURSES PVCC DOES NOT NOW OFFER THAT YOU WOULD LIKE US TO OFFER?
RESPONSE
NO
ARE YOU GENERALLY FAMILIAR WITH THE TYPES OF COURSES OFFERED AT PVCC?
YES
HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT PVCC?
NEWSPAPER ____
RADIO ____
TV ____
MAILOUT ____
ACQUAINTANCE ____
OTHER ____
HAVE YOU EVER CONSIDERED ATTENDING PVCC?
WHAT KEPT YOU FROM COMING TO PVCC?
MONEY
TIME
TRANSPORTATION
OTHER
TOO OLD
SOME FINANCIAL AID IS AVAILABLE. THREE CREDIT COURSES COST $45.75. MAY I MAIL YOU A FINANCIAL AID BROCHURE? ____
WHAT DAYS OF WEEK/ TIMES OF DAY WOULD BE BEST FOR YOU? ____
THE CITY BUS SERVICE NOW INCLUDES PVCC MAY I MAIL YOU A SCHEDULE? ____
WOULD YOU CARE TO EXPLAIN? ____
NO
(EXPLAIN) PVCC OFFERS COURSES THAT HELP PEOPLE
•PREPARE FOR NEW JOBS
•IMPROVE THEIR SKILLS IN IN THEIR CURRENT JOB
•EARN A TWO YEAR DEGREE AND TRANSFER TO A 4 YEAR INSTITUTION
•LEARN THINGS THAT INTEREST THEM LIKE PHOTOGRAPHY
DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HOW MUCH A THREE-CREDIT COURSE COSTS?
RESPONSE $____
$45.75 FOR A VIRGINIA RESIDENT
WHAT IS YOUR ESTIMATE OF THE AGE OF PEOPLE COMING TO PVCC?
RESPONSE
OUR STUDENTS RANGE IN AGE FROM THE LATE TEENS TO NINETY. THE AVERAGE IS ABOUT 27.
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO MAIL A COLLEGE FALL COURSE SCHEDULE TO YOU?
YES
NO
VERIFY NAME & ADDRESS
STARTING THIS FALL THE CITY BUS SERVICE WILL INCLUDE PVCC. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND HELP

SURVEY AREA
DESIGNATOR _____

PHONE NO. _____
NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA _____

1ST CALL	2ND CALL	3RD CALL
DISCONNECTED ___	REFUSED ___	REFUSED ___
REFUSED ___	CALL BACK ___	BUSY SIGNAL ___
CALL BACK ___	BUSY SIGNAL ___	NO ANSWER ___
BUSY SIGNAL ___	NO ANSWER ___	COMPLETED ___
NO ANSWER ___	COMPLETED	
COMPLETED ___		

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